

Monday October 3rd – Read Exodus 6:28-7:24 Pharaoh asks the question, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice...?” and Moses is God’s mouthpiece to demonstrate the answer. Moses has been specially preserved and prepared by God for eighty years to be His instrument of deliverance. But that deliverance will come at a cost, with an important lesson in the process. Pharaoh’s question flaunts his fundamental unwillingness to acknowledge the all-powerful God. God unleashes a series of plagues that show His power over all the so-called gods of Egypt. Moses announces the plagues to demonstrate who God is and why Pharaoh should obey Him at the banks of the Nile River, which the Egyptians worshiped and revered as their source of life and power. *How do we become messengers to those in our lives who don’t believe or who are too busy to pay attention to God?*

Tuesday, October 4th – Read Exodus 7:25-8:19 Why frogs? They were considered sacred, a symbol of fertility, by the Egyptians. With the addition of the gnats without warning, Pharaoh’s magicians recognized that “God has done this” yet Pharaoh still reneged on his promise to let Israel worship the Creator (vv. 15 & 19). If this story were aired on prominent news channels today, the emphasis would be on the injustice of slavery, and indeed, slavery is unjust. But the focus of God’s story is redemption. God saved Israel out of slavery to worship Him. How free are we to worship today? There are many ways to be entangled by the “gods” of our day, though we’re not so likely to idolize a river or a particular animal. But what about the seemingly sacred idea that real freedom is doing whatever we want? *How are God’s limits of discipleship a gracious guide in life?*

Wednesday, October 5th – Read Exodus 8:23-32 A pattern emerges as God releases the fourth plague. We see a symmetrical, unfolding scheme. The first nine plagues are a series of three plagues each. The first is announced by Moses at the Nile, the second by Moses at the palace and the third without warning. As swarms of flies are released into Egypt, God makes a distinction between God’s people and the Egyptians. God does this with other plagues as well (Exodus 9:4,6; 9:26; 10:23; 11:7) but this is our first glimpse of the distinct preservation of God’s people in the midst of these plagues. This is a vivid reminder that God is a covenant-keeper. God’s judgment was a reminder to the Hebrews of God’s calling. Their exemption from Egypt’s calamities affirmed that God had set them apart for His purposes and an emphatic display of His character. We can take similar comfort in the knowledge that we are children of Israel’s God.

Thursday, October 6th – Read Exodus 9:13-35 In the desert land of Egypt, God sends a wildly destructive hailstorm. The Egyptians worshiped fire and water so God used both to judge them. The Lord’s purpose is clear: to show power and bring honor using imagery the Egyptians understood. The Lord tells Pharaoh that He could have

wiped the people out completely but He wants them to know who He is (vv. 14-16). His goal is to save, not destroy. The Apostle Paul repeats this lesson in Romans 9:10 to emphasize God’s power, justice and mercy. The purpose of God’s story is being realized in this passage. The Egyptians are now beginning to fear the God of Israel and obey Him. Those who believed Moses’ message sheltered their servants and livestock and were spared the worst of the destruction. Those who did not know Him and saw His character displayed in acts of power could choose to turn and believe. God’s justice is married to His mercy and that divine partnership is displayed here. *What about this makes you uncomfortable? How does it fit with the grace of Jesus? How can we balance love and peace with the understanding that a judgment will come someday?*

Friday, October 7th – Read Exodus 10:1-20 The Lord tells Moses that Pharaoh’s stubbornness and the resulting plagues will be a lesson for his (Moses’) children, their children and generations to come. This is emphasized repeatedly in Exodus, as the memory of God’s promises kept must be passed down from generation to generation. (More than 400 years later, the Philistines remembered the Lord God of Israel as the one who plagued the Egyptians.) This incident was sung repeatedly in the Psalms as a reminder of Yahweh’s power. This story is regularly heard on the lips of Jewish people worldwide to mark God’s faithfulness to His covenant. Memorializing what He’s done through the generations is a foundation for our faith. God wants this story repeated to Israel’s children for centuries to come so all will know that He is the Lord (v. 2). *What is the most important lesson on faith you have taught your children or children in your circle of influence?*

Saturday, October 8th – Read Exodus 11:1-10 Pharaoh refused to release Israel, God’s firstborn son, and now God will take his firstborn son. This tenth plague cannot be reversed by Pharaoh’s insincere confession of sin—there is a price to pay. It dealt a final blow to the Egyptian false gods and undermined *Osiris*, the Egyptian giver of life. The entire community was being judged from the lowest to the highest. The death of Pharaoh’s firstborn wiped out the future divine king over the land. Some might respond to this passage by pumping a fist with glee over God’s great judgment of the “bad guy” while others might shake their heads in disbelief over a God whose judgment is so deadly. But either response would be missing the point. God is made known through these mighty miracles. Where God pronounces judgment, God provides a way of escape, even to the final and most deadly plague. Without God’s provision, no one would be spared from that plague; the death of the firstborn included the children of Israel as well as the Egyptians. All would pay the penalty unless they were sealed by the blood of the lamb on the door. God’s justice and mercy are inextricably linked. All people are under God’s authority. There were those with the Hebrews who listened to God and took hold of His escape plan, as seen in the next chapter. The Lord chose Israel to teach all nations about Him. He did this to show His love and faithfulness. This final plague is a disturbingly graphic yet comforting picture of the Redeemer who was to come